CAPA Workshop Minutes
December 3, 1998

CAPA Chair Cynthia Jahns opened the workshop by introducing University Librarian Allan Dyson and invited him, as is traditional, to address the session.

AD: The Librarian review process has been marked by consistency over time. There has never been a complete misunderstanding or misreading of the participants' roles or of the process itself.

Nothing we do is more important than the review of peers; it defines us. Through peer review we say what it means to be a librarian in UC. The outcome of this collegial process is a very professional librarian staff. Through peer review we set very high expectations of each other and indirectly of ourselves.

There are no "hot buttons" this year. Members should look at the minutes of past CAPA workshops for insights into specific issues.

There is a new Executive Vice-Chancellor (EVC) this year. Previous EVCs have taken librarian reviews very seriously. The EVC's impression of librarians has been determined by how librarians themselves approach the peer review process.

There are two areas of improvement in recent years. First, the brevity, civility and balance in letters has increased. Second, CAPA's reports have been more thoughtful, reasoned and conclusive.

It is important to remember people find it easier to give out criticism than to receive it. We can be more civil addressing "areas for improvement."

Anyone having questions about any part of the review process can use AUL HR Kate McGirr as a resource.

At the conclusion of the UL's remarks, the CAPA Chair invited questions for the UL from the members. None were asked.

The CAPA Chair then began a discussion of several issues CAPA was asked to address.

Change in Primary Supervisor during the review period: This is an exceptional year in the number of librarians who experienced a change in supervisors. UCSC has no written procedure in place to recommend how this change should be accommodated in the review process.

CAPA recommends that the current review initiator hold a meeting with the candidate and all review initiators the candidate has had during the time period under review. The purpose of the meeting would be to ensure that the candidate's activities and accomplishments are addressed thoroughly and completely in the review. At the meeting, the supervisors and the candidate should come to agreement on which supervisor should address which activities, during which time periods.

The candidate would be well-advised to prepare and bring to the meetings a list of activities and accomplishments, with time frames, to facilitate division of review assignments.

CAPA also suggests that the candidate feel free to provide a copy of the self-evaluation to all reviewers involved in the process.

CAPA recommends that the current supervisor consider incorporating sections of the comments made by previous supervisors as needed to provide coherence to the overall picture presented in the review.

McGirr: The last time this issue was addressed by CAPA was in 1992. At that time, the "Contents Form" was altered to identify letters from "other supervisors". The Review Initiator should feel free to include large chunks of the past Primary Supervisor's letter within the body of the review. Candidates can assist the process by providing a copy of the self-evaluation to the past Primary Supervisor.
comment: The self-evaluation is usually one of the last pieces to be produced during the review process, while a supervisor's letter is one of the first.

comment: Perhaps providing a copy of the BioBibliography would be more appropriate.

questions: What about changed Secondary Supervisors? Isn't the impact of these changes greater? Shouldn't Secondary Supervisors have more of a role in the review process as well?

CAPA: The focus of the issue addressed to CAPA was on the role of past Primary Supervisors. The role of the Secondary Supervisors, including past Secondary Supervisors, is well established, focusing on areas of responsibility normally outside of the Review Initiator's experience.

AD: In cases where there is a past Primary Supervisor there is an overlap in coverage in the candidate's primary area of responsibility, and there is no established means of dealing with this. Thus, CAPA's recommendation that the two supervisors meet in order to coordinate how they will address this area.

Web site development: These contributions should be covered by the candidate in the self-evaluation in a manner similar to other contributions (e.g. handouts, papers, or other information systems). Any contribution should be documented as to its significance, so that the reviewers can assess the quality of the contribution. Supervisors may consider asking for letters evaluating the significance of the content, or the technical expertise displayed, if they feel the letter would provide information that would contribute to their ability to more accurately gauge the contribution made.

added CAPA comment: It is important that the candidate place the Web development work within the context of the position's responsibilities.

question: What about lead up time or the learning curve, when you are acquiring skills before an actual product is created?

CAPA: First of all, it is important that your supervisor is aware of what you are doing and understands that this is part of the process and supports this development and use of your time. Also, Web development is not really any different than other kinds of contributions. Conducting research project or writing an article requires a certain amount of lead up time before there is something to show for it. Sometimes there are intermediate milestones, such as completing a course or creating a smaller Web page, to which you can point in your review. However, the review process can assess only real accomplishments and if you have nothing to show for your work, that's just how it is.

AD: This is a really good reason to include the reasons why someone is on your list of people to solicit for letters. A Review Initiator is going to have a set of names from which to choose and it is good to know which ones can provide comments on which contributions. This will also prompt them to ask for comments about this particular contribution. If you have not indicated this in your list, the Review Initiator may not know to ask and the referee may not think to comment specifically on this point.

CAPA: It is important for the candidate and the Review Initiator to discuss and agree on how these kinds of contributions should be presented and documented.

Errors and Carelessness: CAPA strongly advises candidates that a self-evaluation with numerous spelling errors, misplaced sentence (or paragraph) fragments, and incorrect interpretation of acronyms will be seen as a reflection of the candidate's overall quality of work. CAPA notes the responsibility of the Review Initiator to stress the importance of the a well-written packet to the candidate.

There is a binder with examples of good review packets available in the Library Office. It is a good idea, and a common practice, to ask another librarian to read your self-evaluation. If you are unsure whom to ask to do so, the AUL-HR is happy to discuss this with you and suggests mentors for this process.

Email inclusions: Email should only be included if it contains a substantive amount of
information about some event or activity.

question: For many librarians, an email note thanking them for a class or other contribution may be the only acknowledgement they receive. If all you have is an email saying, "Thanks for the great class," is that ok to include?

CAPA: Yes, because teaching a class is a substantive contribution. An email thanks for bringing flowers to the reference desk would NOT document a substantive contribution, and should not be included in the packet.

At this point the floor was opened to other discussion and questions.

KMc: Members should see the "Librarian Review WebPages" [http://bob.ucsc.edu/library/internal/personnel/papa/] available within the HR Web site. We may want to consider relying more on online documentation, eventually letting it replace paper distribution.

question: What does the UL look for in off-year reviews?

AD: If you're referring to deferred reviews, the UL is not the driver in these cases. What is important is that there is agreement from everyone involved that this has to happen. Good reasons for deferring a review are usually that there has not been enough time for a review to take place, for instance because the person is too new in the position or there has been a leave of absene. Even then, it depends on what proportion of the review period has been missed. Inadequate reasons for a deferred review are because of poor performance.

For accelerated or early reviews, the documentation needs to show that the candidate has done the equivalent of a full review period's work in the shorter time. This is inherently difficult to do. Early reviews have taken place only one or twice in memory.

There being no further questions or discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

draft minutes by L. Jaffe;
reviewed and corrected by C. Jahns, K. McGirr, A. Dyson
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